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ABSTRACT

In the last few years, a significant change in staff development has occurred, which has led to a surge toward collaboration between professionals in higher education and public education. Educators tend to have problems with this joint venture as it relates to role identification, because it requres that specific duties or responsibilities assigned to designated administrators and/or faculty in both higher education and public education to clarify consultant versus particpant obligations. This role identification could fall into the categories of information exchange, relevant programming, and protection of expertise. These categories are the major areas of concern in staff development today. Guidelines developed by Barnes and Murphy for increasing interaction programs non-judgmental; when possible, include administrators; reduce scheduling difficulties; and allow coaching teams to remain together for at least 2 years. Dimensions for enhancing morale suggested by Gross and Herriott include: display a sense of pride in the workplace; enjoy the work assignments; and work cooperatively with fellow educators. The collaboration of staff development between higher education and public education can make a major change in promoting excellence in education for the 1990s, leading to a more secure future for later generations. Contains 4 references. (SM)

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Staff Development: Identifying Positive Relationship Roles Between Higher Education and Public Education

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Staff Development: Identifying Positive Relationship Roles Between Higher Education and Public Education

In the last several years, staff development has been the generic word for educators throughout the United States. Why? Because staff development has come to be perceived as a positive marketing and dynamic management style to those on the outside of education and as a labor economic style to those educators who are employed on the inside. You see staff development is merely a new name for in-service and training seminars which most educators view as either time-off from teaching responsibilities or just a waste of time. However, within the last couple of years, a significant change in staff development has occurred; this change has led to a surge towards collaboration between higher education and public education where staff development is concerned. While this collaboration is by far an excellent idea, educators still have problems with this joint venture as it relates to role identification. Role identification simply means that specific duties or responsibilities must be assigned to designated administrators and/or faculty in both higher education and public education to clarity consultant versus participant obligations.

The role identification of these designated administrators and faculty could fall into three categories: (1) exchange of information; (2) relevant programming; and (3) protection of expertise. The reason for selecting these categories is that they are the major areas of concern in staff development today. In fact

in some cases of staff development, programs may be ignored by educators because of their failure to explain the roles of those involved from higher education and public education.

The exchange of information between higher education and public education has been assumed to automatically occur. However, if this exchange is to truly occur, a major assumption must be eliminated. This assumption is that higher education is the total resource center for staff development. Instead, higher education is primarily interested in conducting research and learning new developments and trends in education. On the other hand, public education has assumed that its major role is that of a practitioner. Both institutions of learning have common information that needs to be exchanged. The common exchange of information could be proposals for restructuring curriculum, designs for a feasible budget, recommendations on student retention, or discussions and resolutions on prosocial issues.

Identifying relevant programming, the second category of role identification is imperative for higher education and public education. Examples of relevant programming might be involvement of participants in the planning stages of staff development and/or providing opportunities for participants to practice new developments in actual educational settings. If efforts are not made to involve the participants in activities such as those previously described, the programming becomes irrelevant to those involved.

This will then lead to irresponsibility in terms of participation, lack of motivation to apply new developments later, and, most devastating of all, a failure to learn new information by those in higher education and public education. Administrators both in higher education and public education can also promote relevant programming through their powerful impact on staff responsibilities. They have the greatest influence on staff morale. This influence can be used positively by allowing release time for staff development and designing staff centered programs, both of which will contribute to staff morale. Administrators also should consider focusing on the curriculum rather than on the exercise of power. Curriculum programs seem to be of more interest and more relevance to staff members in higher education and public education than policy procedures. Professional development and curriculum development programs have, in fact a far greater success rate than programs that focus only on improving the quality of teaching (Chait and Gueth, 1981).

The identification of roles in terms of who has the major responsibility for conducting staff development programs or who has the greatest expertise has been the most pressing issue in staff development. This issue is viewed as "protecting the expertise." To clarify this issue, staff development must be allowed to flourish in an atmosphere where an opportunity exist for expansion of expertise rather than an opportunity for protecting expertise. The identified role for higher education and public education is to keep

an open mind and to explore new ideas in order to have the expertise to "TELL" others. However, the common role of all educators is to place the emphasis where it should be and that is to help everyone to grow (Erickson, 1987).

Since the roles have been identified between higher education and public education, now it is time to pay attention to what techniques could be applied for a better role relationship between higher education and public education in the future. The three suggestions that may by considered are: (1) providing and promoting interaction time between higher education and public education, (2) developing a fairness award system and (3) providing an open forum for educators, students and the community.

The interaction time between higher education and public education could provide a strong relationship between roles because of the opportunity to get acquainted with one another professionally and personnally. In a consolidated high school district in Palos Hills, Illinois, for example, peer coaching program was devised (Barnes and Murphy, 1987). Here are the guidelines for this program which could be modeled by other groups to increase interaction between higher education and public education:

1. Make the coaching program a non-judgmental one;
2. Make sure peer coaching teams are made-up of three or four staff members;
3. When possible, include administrators;

4. Provide the peer coaching team with instructors from different disciplines;
5. Reduce scheduling difficulties;
6. Allow the coaching teams to remain together for at least two years, and
7. Encourage coaching teams to conduct their own observations.

These seven guidelines can easily be adapted for peer relations between higher education and public education, however, what is significant to the peer coaching concept is that this approach allows the interaction time to exist, and this is paramount to the identification of positive roles in staff development.

The development of an award system in higher education and public education has been limited to those who play the roles of leaders and ignores the staff members who actually carry out and support the command performance. The rewards for appreciation should be in the form of recognition awards, promotions and travel allowances for workshops and conferences. It also should be given to those who actually do the work and not to those who pretend to have been in the trenches from beginning to end. Fairness in the award system does reinforce a positive atmosphere in the work place. As stated before, morale has a direct effect on identifing positive relationship roles between higher education and public education. Concurring with Gross and Herriott (1965) these six dimensions could enhance morale:

1. Display a sense of pride in the work place;
2. Enjoy the work assignments;
3. Display a sense of responsibility to students and the work place;
4. Work cooperatively with fellow educators;
5. Work with the agreed educational philosophy of the curriculum; and
6. Respect the judgment of administrators and other staff members.

The last idea for the award system is to have an exchange day program. The exchange day is to provide a realistic view of what needs to be done to improve learning in the work place. Each staff member in the work place who participates in a type of exchange can be objective and see both positive and negative changes. By placing one's feet in someone's elses shoes, an educator have the opportunity to instruct a different subject, meet new students, be exposed to innovative programs and, of course, to become more effective in his/her own work place as a direct result of the exchange day experience. Exchange day can certainly enhance positive roles between higher education and public education.

As a follow-up from the exchange day suggestion, the development of an open forum for educators, students and community should be considered. Too often, the educators, students and community are shut-off from one another because of time restrictions or politics. However, many states such as Pennsylvania,

are mandating certain days within the academic calendar to provide staff development programs. The open forum idea need not be a formalized structure like a classroom situation. It should take on the shape of the concerns of those participating, and the curriculum design should be centered around the critical thinking discussions. Of course, the planning of an open forum should be done by a design team make up of educators, students and community people. Allowing the opportunity of an open forum to occur can clarity to lay educators how the roles are identified between higher education and public education.

Over all, the collaboration of staff development between higher education and public education can make a major change in promoting excellence in education in this country for the 1990s. These changes can be brought about by providing interaction time between staff members in higher education and public education, by developing a fairness award system, and by allowing exchange day and open forum programs to occur during the academic calendar year.

All of these ideas can strengthen staff development, clarify role relationships between higher education and public education and hopefully, lead to a more secure future for later generations.

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